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ABSTRACT

This paper reports preliminary findings from a research project in progress which is based on a comparative case study of four elementary schools involved in site-based decision making legitimized by labor/management agreements. The study examines several issues: (1) how teachers exercise power in response to opportunities for affecting school-wide policy and curriculum decisions made at the school site; (2) what formal and informal power tactics teachers use; and (3) how the impact of gender and teachers' sense of efficacy influence teachers' exercise of power in response to opportunities for affecting school-wide curriculum and policy decisions made at the school site. Preliminary insights suggest: teachers wield power in a manner intended to maintain a working environment in which they feel most efficacious; some teachers find greater efficacy in individual authority than they do in group capacity; and informal power tactics are used to maintain the preferred working environment. The preliminary findings also suggest that if initiatives designed to give teachers the opportunity to participate in school-wide policy and curriculum decisions are to succeed, teacher preparation programs and the administration of school systems must reorganize to support the development of group capacity. (IAH)

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**Political Basis of Teacher Response
To Opportunities For Involvement
In School Site Policy and Curriculum Decisions**

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROJECT IN PROCESS

Major Question:

How do teachers exercise power in response to opportunities for affecting school-wide policy and curriculum decisions made at the school site?

Subsidiary questions:

Three subsidiary questions ask what formal and informal power tactics teachers' use, and how the impact of gender and teachers' sense of efficacy influence teachers' exercise of power in response to opportunities for affecting school wide curriculum and policy decisions made at the school site.

Conceptual Base:

The theoretical and empirically derived descriptions of the three faces of power conceptualized in turn by Dahl (1961), Bachrach & Baratz (1970), and Lukes (1976) modified by Arendt's (1970) description of power as "power to" rather than "power over".

Method:

Comparative case study of four elementary schools involved in site-based decision-making legitimized by labor/management agreements conducted in two school districts between October, 1990 and May, 1991.

Data Sources:

Field notes collected during three hundred and fifty eight hours of participant observation.

Thirty-one formal interviews conducted in May/June, 1991 that include principals, administrative personnel, teacher association officials and a stratified random sample of observed teachers.

Documents that include newsletters, grant applications, comparative indicators of school progress, weekly bulletins, meeting minutes, other research reports from these two districts, etc.

Preliminary Insights:

Teachers wield power in a manner intended to maintain a working environment in which they feel most efficacious. Those who choose to participate in group decision-making generally find an increased sense of efficacy through working to extend group capacity rather than working to maintain individual authority. Those who choose to frustrate, or fail to participate in, group decision-making generally find greater efficacy in individual authority than they find in group capacity. Informal power tactics often associated with female gender norms are used to maintain the preferred working environment.

Tentative Implications:

Teacher preparation programs and K-12 systems support the maintenance of individual authority over the development of group capacity. If initiatives designed to give teachers the opportunity to

participate in school-wide policy and curriculum decisions are to succeed, teacher preparation programs and the administration of school systems must reorganize to support the development of group capacity.

How Teachers Exercise Power

(Work in Progress)

The National Education Association staged its 1988 convention in Washington D.C. I attended as an elected delegate. Though actively involved in earlier conventions, this time I sat back and watched the seven thousand delegates to the largest democratically operating legislative body in the world pace through their agenda. Items were introduced, debated and voted up or down in a largely predictable manner. The major points of discussion were usually presented by delegates holding state-wide or national NEA positions.

Then, the issue of "choice" was introduced as Substitute Resolution A-12 and that orderly, predictable body reacted as though it had been jolted by an electric current. NEA Resolution A-12 stated the Association's position against the issue of "choice" which, as politically interpreted by the sitting U. S. President, was advertised as a parents' right to choose any public or private school they might like their child to attend and take the public money provided to educate that child with them.

The substitute resolution was presented by a prestigious member of NEA's Executive Committee. Though he used phrases like "choice....is nothing but elitism" and "(choice) would give the politicians an excuse for doing nothing to help.....students who need it most" (NEA Proceedings, July 4, 1988, p. 269) it became obvious that the intent of the substitute motion was to soften the existing

resolution's rigidity. (Ibid. p. 273) It was also obvious to someone experienced in parliamentary maneuvering that a floor strategy for passing the substitute resolution was already in operation.

Conversely, it became apparent that speakers arguing against Substitute Resolution A-12 did not have an organized floor strategy. They spoke as individuals rather than as representatives of delegations or major caucuses. They did not deliver rousing prepared speeches but rather repeated themselves, asked questions and called for points of clarification which sometimes became argumentative. These people were not wearing the power suits worn by those in leadership positions. Instead, they were dressed as though they planned to hurry out the door to see one more monument as soon as the gavel fell on the afternoon session.

But, confused and unorganized as they were, the tenor of the floor debate made it clear that the softening Substitute Motion A-12 was not going to pass. There was an attempt to stall the final vote. The NEA president pushed the edges of correct parliamentary procedure by arguing from the podium that defeat of the resolution would prevent the NEA leadership from having any flexibility on the issue (Ibid. pp. 276 & 279). However, in spite of the leadership's best efforts, the substitute motion was defeated and a call for a standing vote only made the defeat more apparent. It was a triumph of the "polyester pants" over the "power suits", a triumph repeated throughout the educational establishment as various leadership bodies from government, universities and state and school district

administrations design initiatives teachers choose not to implement; at least not as originally conceptualized. (See, for example, Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988; Sarason, 1982)

My own sympathies lay with the leadership, not necessarily over the issue but with their inability to get their motion passed. How did the unorganized opposition decide what their response was going to be? What was their collective, spontaneous motivation? I'd experienced similar frustration as an NEA affiliate local leader. In 1985 our local association negotiated a school-based decision-making initiative as part of the labor management agreement reached after a protracted strike. Yet, when we began to implement the initiative, we watched many teacher's effectively back away from the opportunity they'd spent a month on the picket line to win. Why? What happened?

My search for an answer led me through the literature on restructuring, staff development, change, decision-making, systems psychology, anthropology, and the political aspects of organizational development, all of which informed my understanding of the powerful forces at work when leaders in the current school reform movement attempt to change schools. Interestingly, teacher's are often characterized in this literature as being, or perceiving themselves as being, powerless. (See, for example, Ashton and Webb, 1986, Goodlad, 1975 and Sarason, 1982.) They are referred to as the people at the bottom of a hierarchal bureaucratic structure, the implementers of programs and receivers of knowledge generated

elsewhere and, indeed, they are. However, that is not the same as being powerless.

I've spent a dozen years watching teachers use power. I've watched them negotiate contracts and manage million dollar budgets. They've hired and fired the staff they employ to represent them. They've closed down school systems until their demands were met. They've run the campaigns of politicians who support their issues. I've also watched them frustrate or absorb without a trace a series of curriculum and policy initiatives generated elsewhere. This is not the activity of powerless people.

Those of us who develop initiatives that purport to decentralize the traditional ~~hierarchal~~ decision-making process of schools, so that decision-making power is shared with teachers, need to understand the concept of power and how teachers use it. The political science literature that describes power provides a conceptual framework from which to examine the political basis of teachers' response to opportunities for affecting school-wide policy and curriculum decisions made at the school site and the associated informal and formal power tactics, gender issues, and feelings of efficacy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretically and empirically derived descriptions of the three faces of power conceptualized in turn by Dahl (1961), Bachrach & Baratz (1970), and Lukes (1976) provided the initial

framework for this study. Dahl, who formulated what has come to be known as the first face of power, argues that the avenues for assuming power are established and written in custom and culture as well as law. Therefore, those who choose to use those avenues can wield power. Dahl recognizes that there are pervasive inequities in the distribution of power, but he maintains that everyone has some resources to use and whether they win or lose, they have had the opportunity to play.

Bachrach & Baratz, who formulated their thoughts in the politically turbulent decade following Dahl's study, argue that the use of power isn't that straightforward. They argue that there is a second face of power. Dahl reached his conclusions by studying a series of decisions made in a particular community. Bachrach & Baratz note that the study of decisions, does not recognize the existence of what they call nondecisions. They use the term "mobilization of bias" developed by E. E. Schattschneider (1960) to describe situations where an agenda of activity can be manipulated so that the issues of some groups do not reach the decision-making arena and, therefore, become nondecisions. If the group's issues do reach the decision-making agenda they can become nondecisions by being effectively modified, or not enforced.

Lukes adds the third face to this trilogy when he argues that there is a situation beyond the covert elimination of certain groups from the decision-making arena and the manipulation of the decision-making process. Lukes maintains that some groups lack

any possibility of participating because participation is not part of their socialized reality. They have no conception of the necessities, possibilities and strategies of challenge in the situations which influence their lives.

Though these arguments were developed linearly, with each theorist building on the work of his predecessor, I will argue that in any given situation the three faces of power can be juxtaposed. I will also argue that there is an additional theoretical base required for a study of power at a school site. Dahl, Bachrach & Baratz, and Lukes, all define power as the power of A over B, the power of A to make B do something. However, teacher's collegial relationships are marked by an ethic of egalitarianism (Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975). Teachers do not want to exercise power over other educators. Their interest in power is power defined as capacity. Capacity concerns teachers' access to resources and the ability to influence the goals and direction of their institution (Kanter, 1983; McLaughlin & Yee, 1988; Stein & Kanter, 1980).

Arendt (1970), writing from the same political science literature base as Dahl, Bachrach & Baratz and Lukes, provides an explanation of power as capacity. Arendt argues that power is not necessarily a phenomena of conflict between A and B in which A affects B, but a phenomena of A and B working together to increase their capacity to act by acting in concert (p. 44). She discusses power as "power to" rather than "power over". Lukes argues that Arendt's arguments are essentially revisionary, persuasive

redefinitions of power that are out of line with the traditional meanings and with the concerns that have always preoccupied students of power (1976, p. 30). However, Hartsock comments that alternative theories of power are the result of different epistemologies and the adequacy of any given theory depends on the adequacy of its epistemological base (1983, p. 7).

Lukes, himself, maintains that power is a concept which is ineradicably value-dependent. Its definition and any given use of it, once defined, are inextricably tied to a given set of value-assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical application. (Lukes 1976, p. 26). Arendt's discussion of power as "power to" rather than "power over" and her description of power as capacity extends the epistemological base necessary for an examination of a profession that values egalitarianism, access to resources and the ability to influence the goals and direction of their institution.

Grounding a study in a conceptual base that depends, in part, on the identification of nondecisions and nonparticipation due to an inability to perceive the possibility of participation provides a considerable challenge whether one chooses to define power as "power to" or "power over." However, as Lukes comments, just because something is difficult doesn't mean you shouldn't do it.

There is a further practical difficulty in a qualitative study such as this. Collecting, recording, and organizing the voluminous

data base is a formidable task which, thankfully, has been completed. (See Appendix 1 for methodological information.) Final analysis is in process and the information that supports the following arguments will be accounted for in the developing dissertation. The following is a report of the findings from the first examination of the data in which meaning was generated by establishing relationships among patterns or themes, building logical chains of evidence and making conceptual and theoretical coherence as discussed by Miles & Huberman (1984). Testing and confirming the following insights is the next step.

PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS

My initial observational focus was primarily informed by Lukes' argument that some groups do not participate in decision-making because they have no conception of the necessities, possibilities and strategies of challenge in the situations which influence their lives. However, it was quickly apparent that a focus based on only one of the three conceptualizations would be incomplete since each face of power is expressed throughout the units of analysis, nesting inside each other like Russian Matreshka dolls. An examination of a single story line, may prove helpful in demonstrating the multiple expressions of power apparent in the development of one issue.

The story line was extracted from field notes, interviews and documents collected at the site I judged to be most actively involved in school improvement efforts. The principal of this school

presented the faculty with the opportunity to become associated with an initiative designed to help students who were perceived to be "at risk." Dahl's conceptualization of the first face of power leads to an analysis of the behavior involved in the decision-making around this key issue that includes an examination of the observable conflict and the interests of the parties as revealed by their participation in the process. (See Appendix 2)

First Face of Power

The principal and at least one teacher went to a district-wide presentation explaining the initiative. They also interviewed principals and teachers from schools that had some experience with it. On October 31st, at a small site committee gathered to plan a full faculty meeting to be held the following Wednesday, the principal suggested that the innovation be presented for the faculty's consideration. The committee debated probable faculty response to the addition of one more initiative, the timing of the presentation, and the decision-making process. The committee chose to present the innovation as an initial announcement with a final decision to be made at some future time.

The announcement was made as agreed. The staff asked for additional information which was subsequently provided through staff room discussions and papers put in school mailboxes. The issue was not brought to a vote of the full faculty until February 6th. It was hotly debated. A group of faculty members asked for a further delay citing their need for more information. Others

countered that the information was sufficient and that it was time to make a decision. The same group wanted a written ballot, others called for a show of hands. The chair asked those who wanted to vote by a show of hands to raise their hands. A majority complied. Finally, sixty-six percent of the faculty voted by a show of hands to become associated with the initiative. The chair ruled that the issue passed. The ruling was challenged by a teacher who declared a need for a bigger super-majority of those voting yes. The chair announced that the ruling would stand.

A closer look at the events described above reveals a deeper layer of interaction, just as opening one Matreshka doll reveals another. Bachrach & Baratz agree with Dahl that an analysis of the behavior involved in decision-making around a key issue should include looking at the observable conflict and the interests of the parties as revealed by their participation in the process. However, Bachrach & Baratz add the examination of nondecision-making, potential issues, covert conflict and grievances to the explication process. (See Appendix 2) Their formulations require an observer to become aware of how bias is mobilized.

Second Face of Power

The October 31st decision to delay the vote and introduce the opportunity as an announcement was a strategy for achieving a non-decision. Committee members who supported the idea felt it would be voted down if a final choice was forced at that time. As one attendee argued, "They're not gonna go for this now. We need more

information. It's gonna sound like one more thing." In the three month interval between the announcement and the vote, supporters and nonsupporters worked to mobilize bias toward their point of view through both overt and covert activity, or as some choose to term it, ongoing professional discussion.

Opposition to the new initiative was centered among primary staff members who still had a festering grievance about being "slam-dunked" into an earlier innovation they didn't like. Primary teachers held informal discussions among themselves in which they shared their frustrations, compared the process for considering this innovation with their earlier unsatisfactory experience, honed their reservations and objections, and attempted to achieve opposition consensus. They lobbied for the support of like-minded teachers from other segments of the faculty. They made their reservations known in the staff room and in separate discussions with the formal and informal school leadership. They asked questions for which there could be no definitive answers at that point in time.

Support for the innovation was centered in the intermediate and support service staff who also held informal discussions among themselves confirming their unified position. They listened to issues raised by the opposition, answered questions and countered arguments. The requested information placed in school mailboxes was chosen by supporters and every piece lauded the innovation. In fact, much of the literature was supplied by the outside groups promoting it.

Whether intended or not, presenting the possibility of becoming associated with the innovation to the school's parent/teacher council on January 29th mobilized supportive bias. The four attending parents' enthusiasm for the idea as presented by a supporter noticeably silenced further discussion by the one teacher opponent in attendance. The council voted to support the idea with the request that the full faculty be made aware of their position. The teacher who was opposed abstained from that vote. When the site council's support was announced during the course of the February 6th meeting, there was a further noticeable affect in the body language of the opposition. They looked as though they felt outflanked. One teacher asked, "Why wasn't I told about this? After all, I am on that council. Was I late or what?" Another asked, "Why are we hearing about this today for the first time?"

Bias was further mobilized through a nondecision made just before the vote on February 6th. One teacher asked for a prevote decision to determine how big the super-majority should be before the innovation would be accepted. She referred to the need for procedural by-laws, a request she made repeatedly during the observation period and around which there were a series of nondecisions. The chair refused to name a percentage. When a different teacher challenged the super-majority as being unacceptably low (see above) the chair responded. "I can't just sit up here and name a percentage, any percentage I want. We don't have any by-laws about that."

Third Face of Power

Just as Bachrach & Baratz provide us with a lens that allows us to peer more deeply into the overt behaviors identified by Dahl, Luke encourages an even deeper examination of the nesting layers. Luke adds control over the political agenda, latent conflict and real interests to the mix. (See Appendix 2) Control of the political agenda as expressed by issues considered at faculty meetings was relatively easy to track. Timing and presentation format were determined by a committee of volunteers who met before each full faculty session. Committee membership varied depending on time and interest but always included the principal and the faculty chairperson. The committee continually sought suggestions for agenda items both verbally and in written format, but the final agenda was established during the committee session. If no volunteers came to the committee meeting, or, if there was no time to hold one, the faculty chairperson determined the agenda.

For example, the final vote was taken during a time that teachers who did not support the innovation were absent, a point made clear in the course of the the angry discussion cited above. The chairperson absolutely denied any manipulative intent and called attention to the preannounced agenda that had been put in everyone's mailbox. The opposition countered that it was widely known before the preannounced agenda appeared that certain people would be absent that day. Someone called out, "I'll vote for the absentees." The chairperson retorted, "Teachers who wanted their vote counted,

have to be here to cast it." This example, like the earlier comments on the voting process, may lie somewhere in the layers between mobilization of bias and control of the political agenda.

There is an additional facet to the same example that lies more clearly in the layer described by Luke. Though the innovation under consideration had major implications for students, students and their parents were not represented at the meeting. The faculty made the final choice. Four parents at the January 29th parent/teacher council meeting participated in the advisory vote but the issue was presented the same day the vote was taken. These parents had no opportunity to seek guidance from the parents they represented. There was no plan to survey other parents or to provide additional information other than making an announcement at the next PTA meeting.

This exclusion did not present any particular problem for anyone, certainly not the parents. There was no evidence that parents were clammering for a voice in that or any other pedagogical or policy decision made at the site. No one was mobilizing bias or manipulating the agenda to exclude parents. It simply wasn't an issue. Parents did not appear to perceive the necessities, possibilities and strategies of challenge in a situation that involved their children's elementary school careers.

Though much more subtly embedded in the data, there is also evidence that teachers who opposed the innovation did not perceive

the full range of necessity, possibility and strategies of challenge in this situation. Like most teachers, they were unaccustomed to extensive group decision-making. They had not sought the opportunity. It was brought to them by their colleagues. They did not particularly enjoy the long faculty meetings where these decisions were made and they did not participate with any particular degree of enthusiasm. Typical comments were, "It's my job to teach, that's what I'm here for!" "We send children home early for our own convenience. That isn't right. Children belong in school." "Why do we have to have all this change? It's all coming so fast. I don't like it." "We talk and talk and talk, and talk. Why can't somebody just decide and tell us what they decided. This takes so much time." "I can't believe this. Didn't we already talk about that? Why are we talking about it again?"

However, frustrated as they sound, their opposition was essentially latent, that is, underdeveloped, concealed, not presently directly. Their comments were expressed as protests, asides and in private conversations rather than as motions presented in open meetings or as direct arguments. Though they were present and attentive at meetings, they were reactive rather than proactive. For example, the super-majority vote for the initiative at the February 6th meeting was followed by a break. Those opposed quickly gathered together in the back of the room. They looked agitated. They spoke together briefly and quickly left the room as a group. They did not reappear until the end of the break when they reentered the room as a group. When a faculty member asked what was going

to happen now, one member of the opposed group said, "Just because we voted against it, doesn't mean we're not going to cooperate. Don't let my body language fool you." Everyone laughed. The meeting continued.

The teachers who were opposed usually chose not to join committees like the agenda-setting group, except for one consistent representative, often asked to serve so that all factions would be represented. They did not counter the supportive articles put in mailboxes with articles of their own. They did not counter supportive statements with well thought out assertions of their own position. They did not engage in debate about the merits of the innovation. They did not threaten future organized, active, overt resistance. They had overt power, as described by Dahl in that they participated in the vote. However, the combined force of the manipulation of the political agenda and a series of nondecisions as described by Bachrach & Baratz overwhelmed their overt opposition and they did not show that they perceived what Lukes describes as the full range of necessity, possibility and strategies of challenge that could put them in the position of forcing their own decisions and nondecisions by controlling or even affecting the political agenda.

This is not to say that the super-majority vote and a naive opposition guarantees a successful implementation of the innovation. As Lukes suggests there is more to consider and that consideration focuses on the real interests of the people involved

and the effect those interests have on the way teachers exercise power. That focus leads us to the heart of the research questions which are as intertwined with each other as they are with the nested faces of power.

Capacity, Authority and Efficacy

As noted above, prior experience with teacher power gained through collective action and the mixed response to the implementation of the negotiated site-based decision-making initiative fueled my initial interest in Lukes' discussion of the third face of power combined with Arendt's conception of power as collective capacity. I had assumed that opportunity plus awareness would cause teachers to be as eager to achieve collective capacity in their work site as they were in their Association activities. However, the reluctance of many teachers to embrace the opportunity challenged my bias. I had to rethink the framework and come to an understanding of the term authority.

The concept of authority is usually tied to positional power (Gamson, 1968; Pfeffer, 1981). Theorists discuss the authority of a policeman, an elected official or, in this case, a teacher. Bachrach & Baratz argue that such a conceptualization is too narrow. They broaden the definition of authority to include a set of expectations based on accepted values. According to Bachrach & Baratz, the degree of authority a person with positional power possesses is related to the extent that person's actions reflect the values and expectations of the community in which the position exists.

Though it took me a long time to see it, I finally understood that some teachers did not want to lose their traditional authority, no matter how "aware" they might become and, indeed, they resisted activity that could bring greater "awareness." As a good friend explained, "Carol, when I'm inside my classroom, I'm on top. I get to make the decisions. I get to decide what happens. When I step across the threshold into the hallway, I lose that position. Why would I want to step across that threshold?" For my friend, as for so many of the teachers in the four schools in which this study was implemented, an increase in group capacity meant a loss of individual authority.

Faculty members wanted increased capacity and "power to" implement their own visions and develop their own teaching styles rather than "power over" their peers and colleagues, but some wanted power to develop increased capacity within the values and expectations of the traditional school setting. Why? Because the traditional school setting is where they expect to find a greater sense of efficacy. Efficacy means the perceived power to produce effects or intended results, or as Ashton & Webb (1986) citing two Rand Studies choose to define it, the extent to which teachers believe they have the capacity to affect student performance (p. 8). The real interest of the teachers who were opposed to the innovation lay in maintaining a system that supported their expectations, a

system in which they could operate with a greater degree of comfort.*

The innovation under consideration challenged that interest. The earlier innovation into which these teachers felt pushed challenged that interest. In fact, the school based decision-making project generated by the aforementioned labor/management agreement created the same challenge. All three required that teachers work together to assess improvement needs and then collectively devise strategies to meet those needs. Faculty members who supported this general thrust relished the opportunity. They revised current roles, worked together across grade level boundrys, shared subject matter responsibility, planned daily with a team that included support staff, engaged in ongoing professional discussions, revised traditional staffing patterns and increased their own sense of efficacy by broadening their sphere of activity. They made statements like, "I've never worked so hard or loved it so much." "This is the most professional experience I've ever had."

Faculty members from the primary team whose real interests were challenged by these innovations resisted similar activities. I found their weekly primary team planning meetings hard to attend because they cancelled the meetings so often. These teachers

* It may bear mentioning that teachers who wanted increased capacity within the traditional school setting were not, necessarily, authoritarian teachers who enjoyed power over students even if they did not want power over their colleagues. There were, within the units of analysis, distinctly nonauthoritarian teachers frustrated by the expectation that they should work collaboratively with colleagues.

generously shared ideas, materials and supplies. They discussed their students. They interacted regularly on an informal basis hopping across the hall to a colleague's room to share a tidbit of information.

However, the materials and supplies belonged to them individually. The final responsibility for a student was the responsibility of an individual teacher. Interaction intended to produce shared responsibility and problem-solving was avoided. In a revealing incident during a weekly staff meeting, one teacher suggested that, since they were supposed to work more closely, they should probably require a uniform format for the heading in which students write their name and date on papers. Each teacher stated her own preference. There was silence. No one suggested a compromise or other plan of action. Finally, another teacher said, "Oh, it doesn't really matter that much." They went on to the next topic.

The group that found an increased sense of efficacy through participation in school-wide curriculum and policy-decisions that resulted in changed behavior was enormously frustrated by those who found a greater sense of efficacy through the traditional system. The "traditionalists" felt equally frustrated by opportunities that became demands for change. Both wanted increased capacity and "power to" operate in their preferred pattern rather than "power over" their colleagues. Each frustrated the other's ability to achieve it. An examination of formal and informal

power tactics and related gender norms may shed light on faculty interactions as they struggled through this conflict.

Gender Implications of Formal and Informal Power

My original forays into the literature on power were motivated by anthropological descriptions of informal power tactics. The descriptions were gleaned from a reexamination of cultures in which women had been deemed largely powerless. However, a fresh look at the use of power in these communities led to the assertion that women may not have had access to formal power, defined as the rules, institutional ceremonies, conventional procedures and structures that comprise an established order, but they could wield informal power with a vengeance.

Informal power sources include gossip, laughter, threats, noncompliance, false compliance, jokes, insults, body language, flight, sabotage, histrionics, feigned ignorance, and similar tactics (Conton, 1976; Scott, 1985). An examination of informal power tactics is appropriate in this study because teachers are often characterized as powerless in the traditional school hierarchy. However, teachers are similar to women in traditional cultures. They have access to informal power tactics and they know how to use them.

As before, I was made aware of the effectiveness of these tactics through association work. At one incredible association meeting called to allow a membership vote on a freshly negotiated

contract, the association leadership stood in the center of a stage, surrounded by microphones and television cameras, explaining the advantages of voting yes to one particularly sensitive section of the new pact. Leadership supporters marched to the floor microphones and gave responsibly delivered statements of support. One lone detractor stood up and, with a histrionic display of amazement that this sensitive issue would even be considered, delivered a punch line at the end of her statement that caused the entire body to burst into loud laughter and sustained applause. The body voted the contract down.

We learned later that the lone detractor wasn't as alone as we had thought. Someone had spent the evening before the vote calling key members from various schools advising them that the sensitive section was a mistake and should be rejected. The key members came to the meeting prepared to vote no and spent their time whispering that advice to colleagues. We suspected that the "someone" was a member of the negotiating team who was sitting on the stage ostensibly supporting the contract she helped bargain, while the whispering and aptly delivered punch line were defeating it. It was an experience that taught me to respect informal power.

The interplay of informal and formal power in this study can be explained with the same story line used to explain the nested faces of power though it is difficult to extract cleanly defined arguments from the stew of mobilized bias, nondecisions, controlled agendas and latent conflict already explicated. The teachers who

found their real interests violated by the expectation that they would continue to cooperate with the shared decision-making initiatives, were swept along in the momentum of a continuing series of events against their own preferences. When the overt use of formal power failed them, as when they lost the vote, they did not seem to know how to find a foothold from which to make a strong stand. This does not mean that they were without resources. They had what Scott (1985) calls the weapons of the weak.*

It could not have been more clear that all members of the faculty did not welcome the group planning requirements of the shared decision-making initiatives. The discontent was demonstrated through body language that included rolled eyes, downcast eyes, exchanged glances, frowns, looks of amazement, choice of seats, and posture during group meetings and interpersonal interactions. The discontent was also demonstrated through verbalizations that included groans, sounds indicating amazement, tisks, complaints, and sarcastic cracks. Informal conversations that conveyed disapproval could be overheard. The tension created by the requirements of initiatives they didn't support was returned through the discomfort their discontent created for the initiatives' supporters.

An example of this discomfort could be found in the verbalizations of the peer elected faculty chairperson, a person

* There are additional gender norm implications in this study which will be explicated elsewhere.

whom the group voluntarily gave formal power. A typical comment was, "I'm sick and tired of all this. If people have a complaint they should come right out with it, you know? I, I just can't stand all this whispering and back-biting and all this. People come to me with a complaint or they, they say what someone else said. I'm just sick of it.... At first I tried to bring up this stuff for them but I'm, I'm finished with that. If they have a complaint they have to bring it to the group, they have to bring it out into the open. We need to deal with it." Of course, that was not likely to happen when the complainer was not comfortable with group decision-making.

The exchange between the tension created for nonsupporters by the formal power structure's ability to force unwelcome initiatives and nonsupporters' ability to respond with discomforting informal power tactics was a faculty problem. There are additional tactics with major implications for the fate of new initiatives. Those tactics include noncompliance and false compliance, the ability to not do whatever it is that you've been asked to do.

For example, the regular weekly meetings at which primary staff were supposed to plan the development of the primary program were held infrequently. The nonsupporters did not present their problems to the larger faculty group for discussion and mutual problem solving. Textual materials that were supposed to be jettisoned were used. Small group teaching techniques appropriate to one of the innovations were not implemented. Upon returning to

the office after visiting one primary classroom the principal exploded, "Every kid in there is on the same page in the same book!"

In the formal interviews teachers were asked, "What do teachers do when they don't like a decision the faculty makes?"

Responses included:

"I think if they don't like it, I think most of the teachers here are professional enough to try it for awhile but then I think they revert back to the old way and its kind of dropped."

"Well, the number one thing they do is just drop out, ignore, ah, don't talk about it, sit at the meetings and say nothing, go back to their room, close the door and do whatever they want to do."

"They go along with it or else they sabotage it..... now my hope is that they will (go along with it). In point of fact, they don't have to."

As one teacher mused, "There's just no follow through, or accountability. I know I could do it myself, if I had to. I don't know, teach a certain social studies curriculum, you know. That was a decision that we made in the staff and I was teaching something else. I knew I could get away with it."

Doesn't this carry us full circle to a reconsideration of Dahl's conceptualization of the first face of power in which he argues that

everyone has some resources to use? Dahl's point is that everyone has some resources to use in the formal power structure. However, those who are failed by the formal decision-making process through mobilization of bias and nondecision-making as described by Bachrach & Baratz, as well as those who do not have access to the arena in which formal, overt decisions are made and who do not perceive that they should even want to be players, still have access to resources through which they attempt to achieve what Luke calls their real interests. They have the weapons of the weak.

TENTATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The current school reform movement is awash with plans for local school site improvements. The current model that served us for many years now seems unable to meet the needs of a rapidly changing culture. My experiences as a teacher, and an association advocate lead me to cast my lot with those that call for decentralized administrative structures and school-based decision-making because I do not believe that teachers are powerless entities serving at the bottom of a hierarchal structure. I believe that teachers are powerful and that they serve at the base of the system, not the bottom. The rest of us are on the periphery.

An examination of the use of power in conflict created by the introduction of school-based decision-making has implications for those of us who serve schools on the periphery of the enterprise. Excluding teachers from the development of action plans for school improvement has the effect noted in many other places. The action

plans and the initiatives that generated them disappear unless teachers happen to perceive something in them that increases their capacity, sense of efficacy and real interests.

Excluding teachers from the debate that generates the initiatives by operating the formal power structure so that the people who work directly with students remain ensconced in the second and third faces of power has an even more insidious effect on reform efforts. The exclusion can blind teachers to the need for change and the full range of improvement opportunities. Teachers kept in a narrow space will respond with a narrow response. Who could expect otherwise? If teachers were powerless or if their task was ever less than educating the next generation, a narrow response would suffice. But, teachers are not powerless and they do educate the next generation.

There are further implications for those of us who purport to prepare teachers to teach. Teacher education both reflects and supports the maintenance of individual authority over group capacity. The training is organized around subject matter and delivered in separated segments. Teachers do not see models of team teaching across subject matter, for example, professors from language arts, math, multicultural education and evaluation teaming in a year long course in which they model teaching across the curriculum by demonstrating how each of their separate disciplines can be combined at the classroom level; something that K-12 teachers are asked to do.

Teachers do not learn team building techniques, mediation or negotiation skills or see them modeled. Yet, these are critical skills for teachers who must work together even when they fundamentally disagree about how that work should be done. A little knowledge about how to run meetings, develop and prioritize group goals, and work up collegially developed action plans wouldn't hurt either. Finally, teachers do not learn how to conduct systematic investigations into the success of their own change efforts. Their effectiveness is evaluated by principals, by "someone" in a downtown office, by national tests, and by the media, all of whom are one or more steps away from the base. Yet, it is at the base that the systematic investigations can produce the most immediate, as well as the most long lasting, results.

Those of us who ask teachers to participate in school reform proposals that include a decentralized system and a focus on building-based management must provide the support teachers need so that real interests can be expanded and the base from which efficacy is derived can be deepened.

I asked one teacher I trusted to always give an honest, thoughtful answer to tell me why some of her colleagues felt so resistant to new ideas. She thought for a minute and then said she thought that part of the problem was that teachers need to feel honored for their skills, for their service, for their contribution. Teaching without honor "erodes the spirit of the teachers and

ultimately the school." Well, I, for one, would like to honor the teachers who allowed me to learn from their experiences. I honor those who prefer the familiarity of the traditional system and I honor those who embrace change. I honor them for their skill, their tenacity and their willingness to continue the struggle through which we try to work our way to a better system. .

METHOD

Four elementary schools involved in site-based decision-making legitimized by labor/management agreements are the units of analysis in this comparative case study conducted in two school districts. Two of the schools were involved in the site-based decision-making initiative I helped negotiate and implement (see p. 2 above). In one of these schools, there was active participation in school renewal efforts. In the other, participation was incomplete and superficial as measured by the pervasiveness of staff involvement in the decision-making process and the degree of change in the curriculum, the use of time and staffing,

The addition of two sites in a neighboring school district provided the opportunity to compare the perceptions and activities of teachers who work in another school district context; a district in which I did not participate in the negotiation or implementation of the site-based decision-making initiative. In one of the two additional sites the staff was immersed in school decision-making and in the other, staff inclusion was incomplete.

Nature of Community Context

	School District Ia	School District IIa
Site Maturity	School District Ib	School District IIb

Field notes were collected between October 1990 and May 1991 in School District I and between January 1991 and May 1991 in School District II. In each case, an initial five straight school days spent observing at each site were followed by weekly site visits throughout the field experience. Additional field notes were collected at related events such as site council meetings and district-wide planning sessions. Collectively, there were three hundred and fifty-eight hours spent in participant observation. The participation consisted primarily of teaching classes, shelving library books, tutoring and monitoring students, advising teachers on advanced degree work, and, in School District I, answering dozens and dozens of questions about contract and employment concerns, specific district administrators and real or perceived administrative boondoggles. In at least one District I related event, I gave part of the presentation. I responded to specific questions in several others.

In May and June, I interviewed the principals and a stratified random sample of teachers at each of the four schools. I also interviewed two district administrators in each district who were familiar with the development and implementation of the school renewal initiative and the executive director of the local NEA affiliate in each district. During the course of the school year, I collected documents from each site including weekly bulletins, meeting minutes, parent newsletters, and numerous advertisements delivered to teachers' mailboxes exhorting them to contribute money

to some worthy cause, attend this or that function, or solve their teaching problems by taking some special new course. I also obtained copies of statistical analyses of the school's population, test scores, student/teacher ratio, attendance patterns, standardized test scores analyzed by race and gender, etc. for 1990/91 and each of the two preceding school years. Finally, I obtained copies of earlier studies focused on site-based management in each district, two of which were the result of my own efforts.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE THREE FACES OF POWER[#]

One-Dimensional View of Power^{*}

Focus on:

- (a) behavior
- (b) decision-making
- (c) (key) issues
- (d) observable (overt) conflict
- (e) (subjective) interests, seen as policy preferences revealed by political participation

Two-Dimensional View of Power

(Qualified) Critique of behavioral focus

Focus on:

- (a) decision-making and nondecision-making
- (b) issues and potential issues
- (c) observable (overt or covert) conflict
- (d) (subjective) interests, seen as policy preferences or grievances

Three-Dimensional View of Power

Critique of behavioral focus

Focus on:

- (a) decision-making and control over political agenda (not necessarily through decisions)
- (b) issues and potential issues
- (c) observable (overt or covert) and latent conflict
- (d) subjective and real interests

[#] Lukes (1976) p. 25

^{*} Lukes uses the phrase "dimensions of power." I prefer the phrase coined by Bachrach & Baratz "faces of power."

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